

Appl. No. 10/711,036
Amdt. dated November 11, 2005
Reply to Office action of August 17, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The limitations of claims 2, 14, 17 have been added to independent claims 1, 10, 16, respectively to distinguish from Li et al. (US 6,831,346). And, claims 2, 14, 17 have been cancelled. No new matter is added.

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1. Claims 7-9, 19, 20 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112:

Response:

10 Claim 7 has been amended to replace the term "further comprising an N well guard ring surrounding the device" with "wherein the N well guard ring surrounds the device". And the N well of claim 7 is the same as the N well cited in claim 1. Claims 8-9 are definite since they depend from the amended claim 7.

15 In the same way, claim 19 has been amended to replace the term "further comprising at least an N well guard ring between the P+ guard ring and the P substrate guard ring" with "wherein the N well guard ring is between the P+ guard ring and the P substrate guard ring". And the N well of claim 19 is the same as the N well cited in claim 16. Claim 20 is definite since it depends from the amended claim 19.

20 Claim 22 has been amended to replace the term "...The substrate isolation design of claim 21..." with "The substrate isolation design of claim 16...". So, claim 22 has sufficient antecedent basis since claim 22 depends on claim 16.

2. Claims 1, 3-5, 10, 11, 13, 16 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Li et al. (US 6,831,346) :

Response:

25 Li et al. (US 6,831,346) mentions the epitaxial layer 48 is on a p-type semiconductor substrate 46 in Fig. 5. The epitaxial layer 48 comprises the transistor 63 in the p well. The transistor 63 is surrounded by the P+ well tap 68, the n-type doped annular structure 52, and p-type well 54. But, Li et al. (US 6,831,346) never teaches the substrate guard ring being

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positioned beneath the shallow isolation trench like the applicant's invention. The applicant's invention teaches the substrate guard ring 20a is positioned beneath the shallow isolation trench 24c in Fig. 4. And, the allowable claim 2, 14, 17 recite the position of the shallow isolation trench. So, the limitations of claims 2, 14, 17 have been added to independent claims 5 1, 10, 16 individually to distinguish with Li et al. (US 6,831,346). Thus, the amended claims 1, 10 and 16 are patentably distinguishable from Li et al. (US 6,831,346).

Because independence claims 1, 10, 16 are patentable, their dependent claims are also patentable. Reconsideration of the amended claims is politely requested.

10 Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Sincerely yours,

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Date: November 11, 2005

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